

In answer to the question 'Would you prefer Kempton Park', 36 replied YES, 49 replied NO and 3 did not know. Only 18 people answered the question about alternative venues and 14 of these favoured an alternative central London site.

For those who favour Kempton Park, it has to be pointed out that the cost of hiring that venue would be several times that of IC. The AES has to levy an admission charge (and have a large attendance) just to break even.

THE DINNER

49 members and guests attended the Annual Dinner, an increase in numbers on the previous year. It was generally thought that the meal was of excellent quality.

THE EXHIBITION IN 2000

The Exhibition will be held on 11th November at Imperial College. Council has discussed the idea of a 'theme' to the Exhibition (to run alongside the regular exhibits). Several suggestions have been made, including "Garden entomology". More details will follow.

BENHS Council

SHORT COMMUNICATION

A bark beetle burrow-blocking against a chalcid parasitoid?—Whilst visiting "The Coombe", an ancient Chilterns woodland at Ivinghoe, Buckinghamshire, part of the National Trust's Ashridge Estate, on 25.vii.1997, I came across a specimen of the scolytid *Hylesinus crenatus* (Fab.) sitting just at the exit of its burrow, with the end of its elytra blocking the entrance hole. It was not long before I realized that the small ash tree housed many of the beetles, at least 15, all doing the same thing. Closer examination showed that a small chalcid was loitering near one of the holes (Fig. 1). Was the hole-blocking by the beetle related to the presence of this hymenopteron?

The chalcid was confidently identified from this photograph by R. R. Askew as *Entedon ergias* Walker (Eulophidae), a known parasitoid of certain bark beetles. The biology of *E. ergias* is well known and a paper by R. A. Beaver (1966; *Proceedings of the Royal Entomological Society of London A*, 41: 37–41) details the life history and early stages. It is primarily recorded as an endoparasitoid of *Scolytus scolytus* (Fab.), laying its eggs on the beetle eggs inside the maternal gallery, but not completing its development until the beetle larva is well grown. It has also been recorded as a parasitoid of several other species of *Scolytus*, *Pityogenes*, *Phloeosinus* and *Hylurgops* (R. R. Askew, *pers. comm.*). It does not appear to have been recorded as being reared from *Hylesinus crenatus*, but this would seem a perfectly likely host.

Beaver comments that a female of *E. ergias* often waits at the entrance to a *Scolytus* gallery, until the beetle is occupied at the far end of the tunnel, when it nips in to lay its eggs. If the beetle returns, *Entedon* retreats out of the hole. I dug two specimens of *Hylesinus* out of their burrows, and as far as I remember, the transverse tunnels were 50–60 mm long, about the right length for completed galleries. At the time I didn't look for the beetles' eggs, so cannot be sure that their work was done. The question in the title of this short communication as to whether the beetles were deliberately blocking their burrows against the chalcid parasitoid must remain unanswered. It is possible that they were still in the process of tunnel-building (wood



Fig. 1. Female *Hylesinus crenatus* apparently blocking her maternal burrow against the attentions of the chalcid parasitoid *Entedon ergias*.

chewings are visible below the entrance hole) and that the *Entedon* was waiting for its usual sneak opportunity to enter and lay eggs. But it seems strange that all 15 or so *Hylesinus* females were sitting in their entrances in exactly the same fashion at the precise time of my visit.

My grateful thanks go to R. R. Askew for the identity of and information on *Entedon*, to M. R. Shaw for helpful advice and to K. N. A. Alexander and G. Cannon of the National Trust for letting me loose in the Chilterns. RICHARD A. JONES, 135 Friern Road, East Dulwich, London SE22 0AZ.